

Colossians 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

Analysis

For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

Despite physical absence, Paul maintains spiritual presence through prayer and concern. "In the spirit" (tō pneumati, τῷ πνεύματι) likely refers to Paul's spirit (human spirit), though possibly the Holy Spirit enabling supernatural awareness. Either reading emphasizes spiritual connection transcending physical separation.

Paul "joys" (chairōn, χαίρων) while "beholding" (blepōn, βλέπων) their taxin (τάξις, "order") and stereōma (στερέωμα, "steadfastness/firmness"). Both terms carry military connotations: orderly ranks and solid formation. The church stands firm like disciplined troops, not scattered by initial skirmishes with false teaching. This military imagery anticipates spiritual warfare language throughout chapter 2.

Historical Context

Roman military discipline was legendary, contributing to imperial expansion. Well-ordered legions defeated larger but disorganized forces through superior discipline and cohesion. Paul applies military metaphor to spiritual warfare: churches resisting doctrinal error require order (sound teaching and godly leadership) and steadfastness (unwavering commitment to truth). Spiritual sloppiness invites defeat; disciplined faithfulness ensures victory.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What evidence of spiritual order and steadfastness exists in your church's response to doctrinal challenges?
2. How do you maintain spiritual connection with believers you rarely see physically?
3. What would Paul observe if he examined your church's defensive formation against error—solid ranks or confused disarray?

Interlinear Text

εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι ἀλλὰ τῷ πνεύματι
G1487 **For** **and** G3588 **in the flesh** **I be absent** **yet** G3588 **in the spirit**
G1063 G2532 G4561 G548 G235 G4151

σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι χαίρων καὶ βλέπων ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν καὶ
with **you** **am I** **joying** **and** **beholding** **of your** G3588 **order** **and**
G4862 G5213 G1510 G5463 G2532 G991 G5216 G5010 G2532

τὸ στερέωμα τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ὑμῶν
G3588 **the steadfastness** G3588 **in** **Christ** **faith** **of your**
G4733 G1519 G5547 G4102 G5216

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:17 (Parallel theme): But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

1 Peter 5:9 (Faith): Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

1 Corinthians 16:13 (Faith): Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Hebrews 6:19 (Parallel theme): Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Hebrews 3:14 (References Christ): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

1 Corinthians 15:58 (Parallel theme): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:40 (Parallel theme): Let all things be done decently and in order.

Psalms 78:37 (Parallel theme): For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.

Psalms 78:8 (Spirit): And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

1 Thessalonians 3:8 (Parallel theme): For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.